

Younger Bush plans 9-city 'Linc

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BEDFORD — After 18 months of campaigning for his father, George W. Bush this week begins stumping for himself on a nine-city "Lincoln Day" tour that will be a preview of his possible 1990 gubernatorial campaign.

In another sure sign the president's oldest son is thinking like a candidate, Bush volunteered to campaign over the weekend in New Orleans for Republican state representative candidate John Treen, the brother of former Louisiana Gov. Dave Treen.

Treen is in a runoff battle with former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke, who founded the National Association for the Advancement of White People after leaving the Klan in 1980.

"I don't want the Ku Klux Klan in the Republican Party," said Bush, who has just moved from Washington to Dallas and is hard at work readjusting to life as a consultant for Harken Energy Corp. He is the firm's second largest individual stockholder.

As if he weren't busy enough, Bush, 42, also is the point man of an investor group trying to buy the Texas Rangers baseball team. That alone is enough to keep him busy full time.

"What can I say? I've got a lot of energy," said Bush, who maintained he's still merely "testing the waters" for the gubernatorial race.

In an interview in his cluttered, windowless office in Harken headquarters near the Dallas-Fort Worth Inter-

national Airport, he said, "I'm a guy who has just come off a presidential campaign. I was working 17 or 18 hours a day."

"I'm like the marathoner who goes from running 20 miles a day to three miles a day, so the idea of working long hours doesn't bother me at all. I like to work," he said.

The key is balancing his interests, which — on the surface — seem extraordinarily diverse.

"So far I've been able to balance my business opportunities and doing what I think is my responsibility as a fairly well-known political figure in Texas, and that is to go out and help build the Republican Party," said the president's near-namesake.

The dad is George Herbert Walker Bush; the son is George Walker Bush, no Jr.

Some of his critics, however, contend it's no balancing act for the man they believe will run for governor. Other potential GOP contenders for the job include Secretary of State Jack Rains, Railroad Commissioner Kent Hance and flamboyant oilmen Clayton Williams and T. Boone Pickens.

"It only looks like he's going off in all these different directions. But what he's clearly trying to do are high-profile things he hopes will increase his exposure and boost his popularity," said one political consultant who requested anonymity.

"He's got to do something to make it appear he's paid some dues if he wants to be taken seriously," the consultant said.

"Bush is a rich kid playing twiddly-sticks," said Ed

St. Louis \$49 \$98

oln Day' speaking tour of Texas

Martin, executive director of the Texas Democratic Party.

"But he's not going to play twiddly-sticks with the Texas voters. They're going to reject this Prince George son of the president, and rightfully so because he doesn't have the experience or credentials to run the state," Martin said.

Bush is well aware of the criticism and said he will respond aggressively when it comes up.

"I know there are some people saying, 'The boy has never paid his dues,'" he said. Besides his work as a top adviser in the presidential campaign and serving on his father's transition team, Bush's only other political experience is an unsuccessful congressional race against Hance in 1978.

"But I went to 94 counties in 1988 carrying the banner not only for George Bush but for a lot of people running for the state Legislature. The people out there know where I was. I know exactly what I have done for the Republican Party of Texas," he said.

"If it's important in primary politics to have touched the people, I have done it — a lot," Bush added. "And

I'm going to do it again."

Enter Lincoln Day, a traditional period of pontification for Republicans.

In addition to several Dallas speeches, Bush's Lincoln Day swing will hit nine key Texas areas between Feb. 10 and March 2.

First stop is Lake Jackson on Friday, followed by Sugar Land on Saturday. Later speeches will be in Tyler, San Antonio, Houston, Fort Worth, Plano, McAllen and Lubbock. The Houston visit is set for the Feb 21.

He is working on a stump speech that will be a homey "thank you" from the Bush family to the voters.

From there, Bush plans to segue to his own political track. He said he will stress his belief that the 1988 presidential election proved "principles matter in politics." And if they mattered last year, "they're certainly going to matter in 1990," he said.

But don't expect anything more than broad themes from Bush for the time being. He doesn't see any need to get more specific now than the goals of more jobs, better schools and stronger relations with Mexico.

Probably the chief factor in deciding whether to run will be the feelings of his wife Laura, 42, and twin 7-year-old daughters, Jeanna and Barbara, said Bush.

"They've just endured the wars of a presidential campaign, and we managed to come back as a stronger family," he said. "The question then is whether my wife, a former librarian, is prepared to step out into the public arena one more time."



BUSH:
Candidate?